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**Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**
**Seventh session**
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Item 8 (c) of the provisional agenda*
**Ongoing priorities and themes and follow-up: urban indigenous peoples and migration**

# Information received from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

## United Nations Human Settlements Programme

*Summary*

The international Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous People and Migration, held in Santiago from 27 to 29 March 2007, invited the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the agencies that organized the meeting to elaborate policy guidelines for governments and local authorities to assist in the development of public policies related to the challenges faced by indigenous peoples in urban areas. As agreed by the Permanent Forum at its sixth session and by the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues at its 2007 annual meeting, UN-Habitat has started implementing that recommendation. The first of the planned series of policy guides to urban indigenous peoples' issues will be on housing. The guide is expected to contribute to the more effective realization of indigenous peoples' housing rights and secure tenure in the urban setting.

UN-Habitat has several policy instruments and programme activities that are relevant to indigenous peoples, climate change challenges and mitigation. The Programme's new Global Campaign for Sustainable Urbanization and the advocacy work of the recently established Sustainable Urban Development Network focus on urban governance, decentralization and environmental issues, looking at how climate change impacts human settlements and how to adapt cities and local governments, with the participation of civil society, to be more responsive to climate challenges.

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**The Governing Council of UN-Habitat revised its resolution on sustainable development of Arctic cities at its last session in April 2007. Under that mandate, UN-Habitat is currently exploring partnerships with the Arctic Council and other stakeholders, looking at climate change issues and impacts on Arctic communities, which to a large extent are made up of indigenous peoples.**

# I. Response to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues addressed to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

## A. Recommendations of the Permanent Forum at its fourth and fifth sessions

1. In fulfilment of the recommendation made by the Permanent Forum at its fourth and fifth sessions, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, organized the Expert Group Meeting on Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration. The summary report of the meeting was submitted to the Permanent Forum at its sixth session and has been made available on the websites of UN-Habitat and other participating organizations.[1] In addition, a print publication with a CD containing the full account of the meeting (all papers, presentations, deliberations and recommendations) has been published by UN-Habitat.[2]

## B. Recommendations of the Permanent Forum at its sixth session

2. In recognizing the challenges related to urbanization and indigenous peoples, at its sixth session the Permanent Forum noted the outcome of the above-mentioned expert group meeting and agreed to its recommendations. The meeting invited the co-organizers to consider the elaboration of guidelines for governments and local authorities to assist in the development of public policies related to indigenous peoples and their challenges faced in urban areas (Expert Group Meeting report, para. 41). In response to this invitation by the meeting and recommendation of the Permanent Forum at its sixth session, and as requested by the United Nations Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues at its annual meeting in 2007, held in Montreal, Canada from 17 to 19 September 2007;[3] and in line with the newly adopted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see resolution 61/295, annex), UN-Habitat, through the Inter-Agency Support Group, has begun to coordinate the elaboration of the requested policy guidelines. They are proposed to be developed in the form of brief policy guides for the following thematic areas: (a) employment and local economic development; (b) education; (c) health; (d) transition/settlement services; (e) cultural and linguistic continuity — identities — ethnic mobility; (f) human security (particularly for indigenous women and youth); and (g) housing. The different policy guides will be produced by relevant United Nations agencies and, where appropriate, will be complemented with practical toolkits and training materials to facilitate implementation through local authorities.

3. The first in the planned series of policy guides to urban indigenous peoples' issues will be on housing. Prepared by UN-Habitat and the Office of the United

[1] See http://www.unhabitat.org/unhrp.

[2] Copies can be ordered from UN-Habitat under the title "Urban Indigenous Peoples and Migration — report and full account of the International Expert Group Meeting, 27-29 March 2007, Santiago, Chile" (HS/966/07E).

[3] See report of the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples (Montreal, 17-19 September 2007), para. 28.

Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, an advance draft of the policy guide to Urban Indigenous Peoples Housing will be submitted to the Permanent Forum at its seventh session. The guide, which draws on the 2005 report of the United Nations Housing Rights Programme on indigenous peoples' right to adequate housing[4] and other existing sources, is expected to contribute to the more effective realization of indigenous peoples' housing rights and secure tenure in the urban setting. It is planned that the policy guide series, including the finalized policy guide to urban indigenous peoples housing, will be launched at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Nanjing, China, in November 2008.

## II. Response to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues addressed to one or more agencies or to the United Nations system in general under one or more items of the Permanent Forum's mandate

4. The work of UN-Habitat on indigenous peoples issues is in response to and mandated by the recently adopted United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, of which articles 21 and 22 state that indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security; that States should take effective measures and, where appropriate, special measures to ensure continuing improvement of their economic and social conditions; that particular attention should be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities; that indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development; and that in particular indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions.

## III. Obstacles to implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum or other policies relevant to indigenous peoples

5. As in previous years, the main obstacle that UN-Habitat faces in implementing policies relevant to indigenous peoples is inadequacy of staff resources and lack of funds. For example, implementation of resolution 20/8 of the 2005 Governing Council of UN-Habitat on the sustainable development of Arctic cities could not be implemented for that reason.

[4] Available at http://www.unhabitat.org/unhrp.

## IV. Other significant information regarding recent policies, programmes, budgetary allocations or activities regarding indigenous issues within the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

6. The importance of the above-mentioned resolution 20/8, which makes particular reference to challenges faced by urban indigenous communities in the Arctic, has not diminished. This became evident at the 2007 meeting of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, at which that resolution was revised and reissued as resolution 21/5 (for details, see endnote).[5] Fundraising efforts for the implementation of this resolution are under way.

## V. Information and suggestions regarding the special theme of the seventh session, "Climate change, biocultural diversity and livelihoods: the stewardship role of indigenous peoples and new challenges"

7. Under its Global Campaign for Sustainable Urbanization and through the recently initiated Sustainable Urban Development Network, UN-Habitat is streamlining climate change issues throughout the agency's programmes, also linking in with its work on indigenous peoples' living conditions.

8. The increased efforts of UN-Habitat in the area of climate change are derived from the Habitat Agenda, which notes as its goal sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world. The Sustainable Urban Development Network responds to this by focusing on enhancing climate change mitigation and preparedness of cities in developing countries, including migration and local economic development. The Network takes note of the impact of climate change on human settlements and aims at building capacity in local governments and providing support for the preparation of policies and preventive measures against potential negative climate change impacts. Here the involvement of civil society and the

[5] In resolution 21/5 on the sustainable development of Arctic cities, the Governing Council noted with concern that the development of human settlements of the far north and the Arctic region was impeded by severe climatic conditions coupled with environmental pollution and a decrease in the number of indigenous people and their growing vulnerability; acknowledged the special need to provide adequate shelter for the indigenous people of the Arctic region and the need to ensure the sustainable development of human settlements in that region; and welcomed the fruitful work of the Arctic Council in promoting the cooperation, coordination and joint action of stakeholder countries of the Arctic region, including principles relating to the protection of the environment and the health of the indigenous population and the improvement of the social and economic conditions of Arctic communities. In the resolution the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to assist in raising the awareness of the international community of the sustainable development challenges of the far north and the Arctic region, including those faced by the indigenous people residing in those areas, and further invited the Executive Director to apply for observer status with the Arctic Council, as well as to deepen cooperation and consultations with other relevant partners, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank, the North-North network and other stakeholders, on the sustainable development of cities and other human settlements and the promotion of improved shelter infrastructure in the far north and the Arctic region, as well as on the creation of favourable living conditions for the indigenous people of that area.

participation of migrants and vulnerable groups, including urban indigenous peoples, are of high importance.

9. Cross-cutting themes in the context of the Sustainable Urban Development Network are: the built environment; socio-economic development, livelihood and urban poverty; governance; health; gender equality; environment (including biodiversity); water and sanitation; peace (including migration issues); energy and economy (including effects on local economic development); and rural-urban linkages that are important in light of the climate change challenge and disaster mitigation, considering effects on food security and migration, among others.

10. Further, as a response to the UN-Habitat Governing Council resolution 21/5 on the sustainable development of Arctic cities, the agency is exploring partnerships with the Arctic Council and its partners and stakeholders, looking at climate change issues and what impact they have on Arctic communities, which to a large extent are made up of indigenous peoples.

11. During the 1980s and 1990s, UN-Habitat produced a series of publications and contributed to research on building materials and innovative construction technologies.[6] UN-Habitat also coordinated the Network of African countries on local building materials and technologies that focused on capacity-building and exchange of knowledge. In the light of new challenges brought about by recent climate change issues, UN-Habitat is planning to revisit its existing materials and resources from the perspective of their relevance to climate change, and the complex issue of deforestation for housing purposes and its effect on biodiversity, which again affects indigenous peoples. This scoping exercise is expected to identify gaps and needs for the update of existing UN-Habitat documents.

12. In addition to the above, UN-Habitat is exploring the following interventions on climate change and its effects on shelter: site selection for new housing development; planning of housing estates; construction processes (including materials, technologies); slum upgrading and urban rehabilitation; management of housing estates and slum areas (for example, public transport systems, waste management, fuel use, water management); strategies, guidelines and capacity-building for climate change mitigation (for example, advocacy through the UN-Habitat Global Campaign for Sustainable Urbanization and the Sustainable Urban Development Network); financial incentives, such as punitive taxation; and funding sources for implementing climate mitigation activities, such as carbon credits.

## VI. List of conferences and other meetings to be held by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme regarding indigenous issues in 2008-09

13. The following are the conferences and meetings on indigenous issues:

(a) Expert group meeting on the status of the policy guides to urban indigenous peoples' issues, parallel to the seventh session of the United Nations

[6] See UN-Habitat, Building materials and construction technologies: annotated UN-Habitat bibliography, 2003, available at http://www.unhabitat.org/housing.

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (April 2008), under the umbrella of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues;

(b) Special event at the fourth session of the World Urban Forum, Nanjing, China, November 2008, with the Inter-Agency Support Group, to launch the urban indigenous peoples policy guide series;

(c) Event at the twenty-second session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council, to be held in Nairobi in 2009.